

HARDWOOD INDUSTRIES IMPROVES

ABOUT HARDWOOD INDUSTRIES. Hardwood Industries was founded in 1981 as a hardwood distributor to residential cabinet shops, commercial fixture manufacturers, general manufacturers, resellers and other B2B customers of secondary wood products in Portland, Oregon. Hardwood Industries has grown significantly, expanding to include facilities in Seattle, Medford, and Bend. Currently, they employ over 100 people.

THE CHALLENGE. Recently Hardwood Industries experienced a higher rate of errors in their order process department due to training and documentation inconsistencies. There was little standard approach to the training process or its delivery, and it took a significant amount of time to bring people up to standard performance. Thus, Hardwood Industries engaged with OMEP, a representative of the MEP National Network, to implement their Smart Talent approach to training.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Partnering with Hardwood Industries' leadership team and the new continuous improvement manager, OMEP provided consulting, coaching and ongoing strategic support for their continuous improvement activities. Hardwood Industries introduced Structured On-the-Job Training and Standard Work within the order processing department. OMEP and Hardwood Industries partnered to create 20 highly visual job modules in the Order Processing Department. These skill modules focus on training where the work takes place, and are designed to be delivered in 30-minute training sessions. Knowledge modules are delivered in 90 minutes or less.

"Causing improved bottom line results is difficult. We engaged with OMEP because we were stagnant. Our results were subpar and all of our employees were frustrated with below average company performance. Flash forward 3 years and an unbelievable change has occurred. Results have improved, but more important than that is most of our employees have embraced the cultural shift we needed to make. They know and want to get better at their jobs. They know expectations for their job functions and want to achieve them. It's fun to get better and be a part of a succeeding team. OMEP opened this door for us. We all feel we can continue to improve, will distance ourselves from our competition and produce improved bottom line results."

-JEFF WIRKKALA, Owner

RESULTS



Order processing training time was reduced from **30** days to 3 days



\$400,000 due to improved proficiency



\$5 million new and retained sales



\$18,000 in new investment

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